



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **Recreation Commission Minutes 3-8-2011**

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7 PM on the first floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, March 8, 2011.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Don Vitters, Jen Rothenberg and Jim Robillard. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included: Robin Varghese, Sue Doctrow and Bill Larson.

Ms. Mayer publically thanked long time Park Commission member Nancy Campbell for her years of service and her thoughtful comments regarding her years on the Commission that appeared in the newspaper.

Mr. Connelly expressed the Recreation Department's heartfelt sorrow for the passing of longtime rink employee and hockey announcer Darren McKenzie. Mr. Connelly stated that Mr. McKenzie's role as shift supervisor during Friday night public skates and rink announcer will be impossible to fill.

### Approval of Minutes

Mr. Vitters motioned to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2011 meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Robillard and approved 4-0.

### Open Forum – Public Comments

No comments from the public.

### Off leash Implementation (Article 36) Monthly Review

Mr. Connelly reviewed the correspondence with the Commission from the following individuals:

- Bruce Wheltle, Ellen Reed, Jane Auger, Nate Goldshag, Mary Anna Foskett, Oakes Plimpton, BethAnn Friedman, Clarissa Rowe and Ellen Kravitz

Ms. Mayer asked Mr. Connelly to talk to the ACO regarding patrolling the Arlington Reservoir. Mr. Connelly and the Commission reviewed the suggestion from Ms. Rowe to designate an area at the eastern edge of Robbins Farm as the off leash area. The Commission discussed the concerns with regard to designating a specific area and moving it seemingly closer to the playground

and the Brackett School. Ms. Rothenberg suggested that moving the area around the park may be beneficial but not closer to the playground or school. Ms. Mayer stated that currently, off leash park users can use the entire park with the exception of the playground as long as physical education classes are not utilizing the park.

The Commission discussed the complaints and concerns received to date. Ms. Mayer stated that the Commission could suggest natural or fenced buffering for those abutters that do not already have fencing.

Ms. Mayer and Ms. Rothenberg asked to have Town Counsel review the entering of the park through a private way and signage on a private way with regard to park access.

The Commission asked that the following consensus be passed on to the BOS:

At the March Park and Recreation Commission meeting, the Commission discussed the proposal to move the off leash location to a designated area on the eastern edge of the park. The Commission was very hesitant to designate an area of the park as the off leash area that may be closer to the playground, school and Eastern Ave.~

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Currently, there is no designation of space at Robbins Farm except when the Brackett School physical education classes are in the park. The entire park (with the exception of the playground area)~is available for off leash use during its designated times.

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Determining the implementation plan for Robbins Farm Park was extremely difficult and time consuming. The Commission held a series of public informational meetings, as well as one meeting dedicated to Robbins Farm that was mediated by a former district court judge. The concerns raised by abutters were discussed and considered.~ It was after these series of meetings the current policies and procedures were put into place. The Commission strongly feels that any changes to these policies and procedures should first involve another public hearing where the proposed changes can be discussed but feels that it is premature to hold another public hearing at this time.

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The Commission will continue to monitor complaints received and explore potential alternatives and solutions.

The Commission also discussed the removal of the trash barrels at Robbins Farm Park. The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to meet with the Department of Public Works to discuss the long range plan for trash removal. Ms. Mayer also asked that during the discussion with DPW the “Big Belly” units that are at the Robbins playground and at the entrance to Menotomy Rocks Park be evaluated to determine if these should be considered for future projects.

### **Stanton Foundation and Thorndike Field OLRA Update**

Mr. Connelly reviewed the two bids received for the Thorndike project. Mr. Connelly stated that Leonard Design was less expensive and had the experience as required by the Stanton Foundation. The Commission agreed with Mr. Connelly’s assessment.

Mr. Connelly stated that he will set up a meeting with the OLRA Task Force and Leonard Design to begin the discussion about design alternatives.

### **Capital Improvement Project Update**

Robbins Farm Slide – Mr. Connelly indicated that Leonard Design was working on gathering information for this project however he has asked Certified Playground Inspector, Jody Reale of Reale Associates, to look at the existing crack to see if it could be temporarily repaired. Mr. Connelly stated that one of slides may have to be removed.

Wellington Tennis Courts – Mr. Connelly reviewed the public hearing and stated that the Conservation Commission would be again reviewing the notice of intent in early April.

Thompson School Basketball Court – No report.

Mr. Connelly reviewed the FY 12 plan submitted by the Capital Committee to Town Meeting. Mr. Connelly stated that the only project being recommended for funding next year was the Thorndike Field OLRA. Mr. Vitters indicated that projects were heavily weighted in FY 14 and he did not feel that plan is realistic. Mr. Connelly stated his disappointment with the Robbins Farm slide request being pushed back a fiscal year even with receiving matching funds from the Friends of RFP, which the Commission agreed was extremely disappointing given the condition of this very popular playground attraction.

### **Rink and Recreation Update**

Mr. Connelly stated that registration continues to be strong in the recreation programs and that the spring/summer brochure was just released.

Mr. Connelly stated that financially the rink should bring in more revenue in rink fees than ever before. Mr. Connelly stated that this should help off-set some of the unexpected capital expenses.

### **Special Requests**

Ultimate Boot Camp – Buzzell Field – Starting 4/19, 6-7 am, Monday – Friday – Mr. Robillard motioned to approve, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg and approved 4-0.

Kirby Morrison – Crosby Tennis Courts – Tournament 7/23, 7/24, 8/12, 8/13 – Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0.

Jim McLaughlin – Various Fields(same as past years) – 7/22-7/24 – Softball Tournament for Girls - Mr. Robillard motioned to approve, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg and approved 4-0.

### **Other Business**

The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to meet with the portable restroom subgroup to review the coming spring season.

Ms. Mayer reported that the ARB has started to discuss a Mill District as an overlay zone, which would help with plans for the Mill Brook Linear Park concept, and that the Busa Land Use Committee was recommending a community farm on the Busa property, adjacent to the Arlington Reservoir, to the Lexington BoS. Also, the Arlington Tree Committee is looking for volunteers to help plant street trees this spring. Ms. Mayer will forward the available information to the Commissioners.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation